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PAST MERSHON GRADUATE AFFILIATE WINS NATIONAL DISSERTATION AWARD

Published: 11 December 2014

Joshua Kertzer (PhD, political science, 2013) was awarded a 2014 Council of Graduate Schools (CGS)/ProQuest **Distinguished Dissertation Award**, the nation’s highest honor for doctoral dissertations. Kertzer’s dissertation, “Resolve in International Politics,” was selected from 71 nominees representing 25 disciplines in the social sciences. He was presented the award on December 4 during the CGS annual meeting in Washington, D.C.

Kertzer’s dissertation, which was supported by a grant from the Mershon Center, examines the concept of resolve, which is a commonly used but insufficiently understood independent variable in international relations.


He describes resolve as “an interaction between situational stakes and dispositional traits,” and uses a range of different methods to explain why certain types of actors are more sensitive to the costs of fighting, while others are more sensitive to the costs of backing down. Kertzer’s faculty advisor was **Richard Herrmann**, professor and chair of the Department of Political Science and former director of the Mershon Center.

Sponsored jointly by CGS and ProQuest Dissertations Publishing, a division of ProQuest Information and Learning, and first presented in 1981, these awards are made annually to individuals who have completed dissertations representing original work that makes an unusually significant contribution to the discipline. Two awards are given each year, rotating among four general areas of scholarship. Winners receive a certificate, a \$2,000 honorarium and funds for travel to the awards ceremony.

Kertzer has also been honored with a variety of dissertation awards, including the American Political Science Association’s 2014 Helen Dwight Reid Award for best dissertation in international relations, law and politics, the 2014 Kenneth N. Waltz award for best dissertation in the field of international security and arms control, and the 2014 Walter Isard award from the Peace Science Society.

Kertzer is currently **assistant professor of government at Harvard University**, where he specializes in the intersection of international security, foreign policy, political psychology, and quantitative and experimental methods.

His work is published or forthcoming in a number of journals, including International Studies Quarterly and the Journal of Politics and it has also appeared on The Colbert Report, Chelsea Lately, Real Time with Bill Maher, and an array of other media outlets. Before going to Harvard, he was a Dartmouth Fellow in U.S. Foreign Policy and International Security at the Dickey Center for International Understanding at Dartmouth College.



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